

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division Report
Variances
BZZ-5035

Date: December 9, 2010

Applicant: asi, Signage Innovations, Inc.

Address of Property: 130 Plymouth Avenue North

Project Name: Standard Heating and Air Conditioning Wall Signage

Contact Person: Paul Benick, (612) 332-1223 x109

Planning Staff: Shanna Sether, (612) 673-2307

Date Application Deemed Complete: November 15, 2010

End of 60-Day Decision Period: January 14, 2011

Ward: 5 **Neighborhood Organization:** Northside Residents Redevelopment Council

Existing Zoning: I2 Medium Industrial District and MR Mississippi River Critical Area Overlay District

Zoning Plate Number: 13

Legal Description: Not applicable

Proposed Use: Two new wall signs

Variance: to increase the maximum permitted height for a wall sign to 35 feet

Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance: Chapter 525, Article IX Variances, specifically Section 525.520(21) “to vary the number, type, height, area or location of allowed signs...”

Background: The site consists of four parcels, approximately 1.89 acres in area, located in the North Washington Industrial Park. The City of Minneapolis recently approved a site plan review application for a new 32,568 square foot industrial building with two floors, measured as three stories in height based on the number of feet. The use of the property is a contractor’s office with warehousing for Standard Heating and Air Conditioning, a permitted use in the I2 District.

There is an existing 6 ft. tall, 32 sq. ft., internally-illuminated monument sign at the intersection of 2nd Street North and Plymouth Avenue North. In addition, there is an existing auxiliary sign at the south parking lot and a fence sign at the north parking lot. The applicant is proposing to install two externally illuminated walls signs at the intersection of 2nd Street North and Plymouth Avenue on the existing parapet of the new building. Both proposed signs are approximately 35 feet above grade and 88.6 sq. ft.

The maximum height of a wall sign is 28 feet from grade to the top of the sign; therefore, the applicant has requested a variance for the proposed height of the sign.

As of writing this staff report, staff has not received any correspondence from the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. Staff will forward comments, if any are received, at the Board of Adjustment meeting.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed by the official controls and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

The applicant is seeking a variance to increase the maximum permitted height for two identification wall signs from 28 feet to 35 feet. The applicant states that the increased height is required due to the architectural features and windows of the new building and to ensure clear sight lines above the sun shades on the building. Each of the proposed signs will be visible from traffic along 2nd Street and Plymouth Avenue. The location of the sign on the building is limited due to the architecture of the façade and the number of windows on the building, but does allow for a sign to be located within the regulations. Strict adherence to the regulations to the zoning ordinance would not cause undue hardship as there are alternative locations to allow for additional signage on the building where it would not require a variance. In addition, the existing monument sign is already positioned at the corner to identify the use of the property at the same location as the proposed signage.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

The circumstances of the height variance are not unique to the parcel. The applicant states the increased height of the proposed sign is due to the architectural features of the new building. The building was constructed in 2008 and the maximum height of a sign in the Industrial Districts was also 28 feet at that time. The location of the sign on the building is limited due to the architecture of the façade and the number of windows on the building, but does allow for the sign to be located within the regulations. The area and type of sign meet the requirements in the ordinance.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The regulations governing on-premise signs were established to allow effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each zoning district, to promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion, to minimize adverse effects on nearby property and to protect the public health safety and welfare. The subject property is zoned I2 Medium Industrial District. Staff believes that the proposed sign would be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance at a height of 28 feet or less. The

proposed signage is externally illuminated and it would not front directly onto any property that would find the proposed sign overly imposing or intrusive.

4. **The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

Granting the sign variance would likely have no impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the increased height or projection be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for a sign adjustment:

1. **The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

The proposed signage is located at the intersection of 2nd Street North and Plymouth Avenue North. These are the only wall signs located on the existing structure. The addition of the two proposed identification signs will not cause unnecessary sign clutter to the façade of the building and they are consistent with the existing signage. The regulations governing on-premise signs were established to allow effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each zoning district, to promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion, to minimize adverse effects on nearby property and to protect the public health safety and welfare. The subject property is zoned I2 Medium Industrial District. Staff believes that the proposed sign would be in keeping with the purpose of the zoning district at a height of 28 feet or less.

2. **The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.**

It is staff's opinion that the signs will be professionally installed with quality materials. The signage is proposed to include the logo and letters fabricated from aluminum and painted with vinyl in blue and red. They would be stud mounted to the wall and externally illuminated. The proposed signage is consistent with the existing monument and auxiliary sign on the property.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the findings above and deny the to increase the height of two proposed wall signs from 28 feet to 35 for Standard Heating and Air Conditioning located at 130 Plymouth Avenue North in the I2 Medium Industrial District and MR Mississippi River Critical Area Overlay District.

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Attachments:

- 1) Written descriptions and findings submitted by the applicant
- 2) Copy of letters sent to the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council and CM Samuels
- 3) Zoning map
- 4) Site plan
- 5) Sign plan
- 6) Photographs